

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

To prove the seriousness of this danger to our democracy, quoting former FCC chairman Reed Hundt when he wrote Sinclair (Talking Points Memo, 10/1104):

"How can it be part of a broadcaster's public interest obligation to aspire to alter the perceptions of the audience about a presidential candidate by showing Biased content that in no way reflects either breaking news or even-handed treatment of the issues?

Why should a broadcaster keep its licenses if it behaves in this manner?"

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.